

## **FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET**

**Meeting Date:** June 7, 2017

**Agenda Item:** 2017/2018 Wolf Hunting Seasons, Quotas and HD Boundaries, and SB 200 Quotas

**Division:** Wildlife

**Action Needed:** Final

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 15 Min

◆ **Background:** Regulated hunting and trapping of wolves was endorsed by the Governor's Wolf Advisory Council and is included in our Wolf Conservation and Management Plan. Wolf seasons have evolved from a conservative hunting-only quota in 2009 to the current no quota except near the national parks and sportspersons may take up to five wolves. Montana's wolf management is a success story that has maintained a healthy, viable and connected population while allowing harvest and reducing conflicts. **Note two differences from our April proposal: 1) based on internal input, FWP proposes that WMU 110, a unit with a harvest quota, will close on a 12-hour instead of 24-hour notice to make it consistent with WMUs 313 and 316, the other quota areas in the state, and 2) allow wolf trapping on Spotted Dog WMA to a limited number of specially-permitted trappers like that already done on three other R2 WMAs.** A summary of Montana wolf numbers, harvest and conflicts is in the Commission packet. Aside from these and regular calendar rotation, for 2017-18 FWP is proposing no change to the 2016-17 season.

Senate Bill 200 allows landowners or their agents to take wolves on their private property that are a potential threat to human safety, livestock or domestic dogs. The Commission annually approves a quota for SB 200 take, which last year was up to 100 in separate Commission-approved intervals of 25 in a calendar year. Few wolves are taken under SB 200; it has varied from 6 to 12. Anyone can kill wolves in defense of life and property, and those numbers are also presented for comparison, but require no Commission action.

### **Wolf take by landowners under Senate Bill 200 (MCA 87-1-901) and Defense of Property statutes.**

Calendar Year	SB 200 Take	Defense of Property Take
2014	6	7
2015	12	4
2016	9	4
2017 to 5/9/2017	3	1

As information to the Commission, we will be moving presentations of wolf hunting seasons, quotas, Hunting District boundaries and SB 200 quotas to the regular biennial season setting cycle of December proposals and February final actions in odd years beginning this December.

**Public Involvement Process & Results:** Public comment was open through May 31. As of May 17, there were 61 comments summarized here and included in the Commission packet. Later comments will be summarized at the June meeting. Fifty-two comments were from non-residents and generally opposed to wolf hunting and trapping and wanting a buffer zone around YNP, which is not allowed by statute (MCA 87-1-304). Comments from Montanans represented the spectrum from no tolerance of wolves through proposal support to wanting no hunting or trapping.

**Alternatives and Analysis:** The proposals may be approved as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions or no change from 2016-17 per staff justifications, public comment and/or Commission direction.

**Agency Recommendation & Rationale:** This largely status quo proposal is aligned with known biology, management history and experience, livestock depredation trends and the Montana Gray Wolf Management Plan.

### **Proposed Motion**

I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve the proposed 2017-2018 wolf season and SB 200 quotas as presented by FWP.